

"I'm stealthy, like a Slayer" by 221BFakerStreet

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Summary:

Steve is a Slayer. He shouldn't be. Hopper had thought it was El, originally, but she's a natural born witch. Steve, as it turns out, is an anomaly. And Hop couldn't believe it at first, because, well, aside from the *obvious*, he seems kind of... *dumb*.

In which Billy is a reformed fanged menace, and Steve is *definitely* not consumed with his presence.

"I'm stealthy, like a Slayer"

Steve is a Slayer. He shouldn't be. Hopper had thought it was El, originally, but she's a natural born witch. Steve, as it turns out, is an anomaly. And Hop couldn't believe it at first, because, well, aside from the *obvious*, he seems kind of... *dumb*.

Hop had called him that exactly *one* time, when he was angry and *terrified* because Steve had gone off on his own to fight a fucking *nest*. And Steve didn't have anybody but him and El and their merry band of dweebs, not *really*. So when they'd all made their way back to the cabin to get patched up, he'd really lit into the kid. Steve had cried and punched a hole in El's door, and El had held him afterward as he sobbed. Hop never called him that again.

And Steve gets it, now. He gets that Hop was just... concerned. And also *really* bad at showing it, but honestly? Steve is used to that, and the point is Hop is *trying*.

So when he very *casually* mentions that *Billy's* back in town, Steve understands why Hop immediately drops his fork and goes to get the chest full of weapons in the corner of the living room.

"He, uh..." Steve clears his throat, tries again. "He says he, uh, has a soul now, so."

Hop pauses with the trunk lid halfway lifted, and El looks back and forth between them like it's a tennis match. He turns back toward the table, expression unreadable.

"What?"

"Yeah," Steve replies, twirling his fork in his hands in a strange parody of how he handles a stake when he's out on patrol. "I found him in the cemetery; he, uh- hugged a cross?"

There is a moment's pause, dust spinning even in the dead air. El coughs, and Steve can tell she's trying not to laugh, but it's fine because if you didn't see what Steve had, it's probably *really* funny.

“What?” Hop says, louder, more concerned. Confused, maybe.

“Right? Pretty fuckin’ weird-”

“Language!”

“Sorry-” (he’s not) “-so I managed to get him off of it cause he was *really* freaking me out-”

“Hugging a cross?”

“-sure was! Anyway, long story short, he’s kind of living- *unliving*?- in my basement.”

By the time Steve leaves to go home that night he has promised five times over and sworn up and down five different holy books that Hop will get to see his new roommate *tomorrow*, and it’s only his own stubborn nature that keeps his pseudo dad and sister from invading his home that very night. And he *knows* that Dustin and the others are gonna find out now, but he’ll burn that bridge once he crosses it because he’s actually *real* fucking tired right now.

He stops at the butchers on the way home, gets a pint of pig’s blood and some ground pork. His mother makes Botifarró sometimes, which is a happy coincidence in this... situation. He walks home on this blessedly quiet evening gently swinging a bag full of vampire bait in a plastic grocery bag and doesn’t hear a *peep*, and *that*, more than anything, puts him on edge.

Billy is pacing the unfinished room in the basement when Steve strolls in. He only stops when he smells the blood- or at least, that’s Steve’s best guess at what’s happening because Billy doesn’t say much these days. Which is wild, because there was a time in their homoerotically antagonistic relationship when he just wouldn’t shut the fuck *up*.

He sighs and carefully peels the lid back from the container of blood as Billy shuffles closer, glancing up at Steve and then back at the container as if he’s not *quite* sure it’s for him.

Steve turns from the work bench he’s using as a makeshift dining

table and holds the container out to his wayward vampire nemesis. Billy takes it gently, cautiously, and Steve turns back to grab the sandwich he'd fixed for himself before coming downstairs. He hops up on the table- there's a chair in the corner, but it looks *about* a million years old- and digs in. Billy is gulping down the blood like water on a hot summer day, and Steve thinks maybe he should be more grossed out than he is, but he just smiles awkwardly and chews his salami and cheese.

He feels a bit like a lovestruck dumbass, if he's being honest, staring at Billy like this. There's a line of blood that has dripped from the corner of Billy's mouth down his chin and it holds Steve transfixed. He tries to motion at it, tries to catch Billy's eye but he's too busy tilting his head back for the last dregs of his meal. When he's done, sated, he drifts over toward the work table.

"There were no vamps on the walk home," he says, just sort of making conversation. Like he's *been* doing for the last four days. Trying, at least.

"Kinda gives me the heebie jeebies, ya know?" He glances up to find those bright blue eyes staring at him from less than a foot away, and nearly chokes on the last bite of his sandwich. Pounds his chest and clears his throat, tears prickling at his eyes. "I can see that you're familiar with the concept, *jeeze*, Billy."

He *swears* he can see just the tiniest twitch at the corner of his mouth, the ghost of a smile. It makes him wonder when the last time was that Billy really smiled. Not one of his sadistic grins, or angry smirks, but a *real, honest-to-goodness smile*. The thought sits there like a lead weight, sinks slowly into his stomach.

"Billy," he says, and the vampire looks down, shuffles his feet but doesn't go anywhere. There's a leak down here in some far off corner, drip drip dripping away, and he thinks that if Billy wasn't already crazy, that shit would get him there for *sure*.

He can't tell him about Hop and El, because whatever strange state he's in right now, Steve knows that he'll run. And he doesn't *want* him to. First he told himself it was because he just couldn't kill this *pitiful* thing that the Big Bad had become. Then, Billy had told him about

getting a soul, albeit in his own rambling way, and, well. He didn't *kill* things with *souls*, right? Kind of goes against the code, or whatever. If not that of the Watcher's Council, then *definitely* his.

"Goodnight, Billy. I'll be back tomorrow. Promise."

And Billy *does* smile, then- a sad, hopeful thing. Steve spends the rest of the night dreaming about it.

Billy is in *rare* form when Hop shows up. Steve's dad is at a work conference and his mom went along for the ride, so he just *didn't* go to school today because, like, *whatever*.

"He's, uh... a little agitated," Steve tries, standing in front of the basement door. He gestures *pointedly* at the stake that Hop is holding. El wanted to see Billy, too, but Steve had bribed her with Eggos and daytime talk shows to keep her nose *out* of it for just a little while.

"Are you *kidding* me?" Hopper looks at Steve as though *he's* the one who's crazy, and, *well*. That's not the *point*, though.

Steve holds out his hand, lifts one brow. Hopper rolls his eyes almost all the way back into his head, and hands it over.

"*Fine*, but if he does *anything*, I expect you to take care of it. Understood?" Hop is firm, but kind. As a police officer, he'd seen a *lot* of awful shit. As a Watcher, he's seen *twice* that. Can't go through that without some scars for your trouble, but Hop is *good people*.

"Understood!" He salutes with his free hand, tucks the stake in the back of his jeans, and opens the basement door.

"Hey, there, *Chief*." Billy is pacing the small room again. Steve covered the windows with black plastic garbage bags, but the light was already on when he opened the door.

Hop doesn't say anything. Just stands tall, arms folded.

"Hey, Billy," Steve says, giving the *weirdest* little wave and immediately wanting to die.

Billy glances at him, shuffles briefly toward his side of the room, then seems to think better of it. Turns back toward Hopper. His eyes go a little...hazy? Unfocused.

“Gonna kill me this time?” He asks in a small voice, all the bravado sucked from him from some invisible leeching force.

Hop looks at Steve, and Steve shakes his head, shrugs. He’s got no *idea*, really, where Billy goes sometimes. Where he’s been. Hop takes a step forward, and Billy *cowers*.

Then Steve’s pulling Hopper from the room, closing the door gently behind him. Hop doesn’t protest. After about five minutes, he hears the creak of the basement stairs.

He walks toward Billy *slowly*. Billy shuffles minutely again, until he’s tucked into the corner of the room with his back against the concrete walls, hugging his knees. Steve slides gently down the wall next to him. Everything is quiet while he waits for Billy to unfold himself.

It takes a really long time.

Billy gets used to Hop eventually, still calls him ‘Chief’. Steve starts spending a lot of time in the basement, and that’s *really* not much different than before, only there’s, like, *way* more blood involved. Anyway, Hop and El are over a lot more often, too. Steve can see things changing, bit by bit. Hop starts off watching Billy like a hawk, like he’s about to freak out and murder them all at any second. It’s a fine line, and it doesn’t always go easy, but Steve is there, and El, well.

Billy *likes* El, likes how *quiet* she is. Steve has never seen her be patient like this before, and it *floors* him. She reads to Billy while Hopper and Steve train. It doesn’t seem to matter what the book is—she’s currently working her way through *The Secret Garden*. Billy sits and listens intently until she’s done. Hop was on edge about it at first, but after seeing how Billy responded, he was willing to admit that maybe this was working.

It’s an overcast day. Steve has just finished round one with the

combat mannequin and is guzzling down a Coke like the unhealthy child he is, when Billy approaches. More than that, Billy *speaks*.

“Steve.”

They are alone down here, the both of them. Hop is working at his day job and El is at school. He thinks he should *really* start calling her ‘Jane’ now, but it’s hard sometimes to remember- to think of her any other way.

Steve sets his drink down and starts adjusting his hand wraps like some kind of overenthusiastic boxer, which, *well*.

“Yeah, Billy?”

“Why are you helping me?”

Steve doesn’t answer right away. What is he supposed to *say* to that? It’s just kind of... what he does, what he’s *always* done. But then he looks up and catches that haunted gaze from the bluest eyes he’s *ever* seen, and it’s *more* somehow.

“I beat the *shit* outta you, Harrington. I almost *killed* you, for fuck’s sake!” It’s the most Billy has spoken in the month since he’s been living in Steve’s basement; the most Steve has heard him speak without making every sexual innuendo and threat of bodily harm he can manage, if Steve’s being honest. And Steve doesn’t quite know how to handle Billy Hargrove (-was that even his real last name? Did vampires even *have* last names?) asking a serious question. His brain tries to default to self-deprecating humor, but he gets the feeling from Billy’s drawn features that their normal witty banter wouldn’t be appreciated at this time.

“Because you needed it,” he says, and shrugs, like it’s really that simple. And maybe it is. He doesn’t think Billy’s buying it, and ok, that makes sense; who in their right mind would help their violent enemy who once tried to murder them? Steve, apparently. Steve would, did, *is doing*.

“You needed *me*,” he mumbles, unraveling his hand wraps like a little kid playing with yarn, and trying his best to look anywhere but at

Billy's face.

And maybe he can *tell*, Steve thinks. Maybe he realizes exactly how much time Steve *spends* down in the musty basement- not just training, but doing homework, eating dinner, and talking... with *Billy*. Nancy and Jonathan are wrapped up in each other, understandably. Steve's other friends are a bunch of twelve year olds, and they're *great*, but they're *twelve*.

And *Steve*... Steve is *lonely*.

And maybe *Billy* is, too.

Billy doesn't say 'thank you', doesn't say *anything*. His hands are calloused and cool to the touch when he gently takes the hand wraps that Steve has been doing his best to nervously obliterate. He wraps them loosely- one, and then two- and then sets them, coiled, on the shelf with all the other fighting accoutrements. He steps in close, and Steve's heart stutters in his chest. Billy's hand comes up, hovers over the edge of Steve's cheekbone, fingers twitching. Steve wonders what it's like to never really *have* to breathe.

"Go get some rest, Harrington." Billy is halfway back to his little basement bedroom before Steve even realizes.

He looks around. He'd meant to go another round with Sir Punchington (Dustin has a *weird* sense of humor, ok, and it's *really* not Steve's fault that the name stuck like it did). He'd meant to do a *lot* of things.

He goes upstairs to eat leftover mac n' cheese straight from the pan. Goes to his messy room, and his half-made bed. Falls asleep in the dark wondering if Billy's lips are as cold as his fingers.

Dustin has been chomping at the bit for *weeks* ever since he found out about Billy. Steve had been afraid that Dustin wanted to put him under a microscope or something, had also had the thought that *maybe* Billy wouldn't respond well to being examined, even if it *is* for the sake of scientific progress.

Mike is less than thrilled- he's never been a fan of Billy, and Steve can't really blame him. Billy has been an insistent and rather *violent* pain in all of their butts for the past year, at least.

Lucas and Max are happy to not go poking the metaphorical bear (or the *actual* vampire), though they both ask a lot of really pragmatic questions- mostly about what exactly Billy's been *eating*. At this point Steve has probably bought half the blood the local butcher has ever thought to stock, but neither one of them are complaining, so.

Will is... scared. Steve tries to take a moment with him, alone, just to talk things out. It's... a lot. Things are hard for Will, especially *this* thing, given what he's been through. You don't just go strolling through a portal to a hell dimension and come out unscathed.

"You never have to see him," Steve says, leaning down to look into Will's eyes, make sure he can *see*. "And I wouldn't *let* you if I didn't think it was safe."

There is a moment in which the bottom drops out, and Steve wonders if he's fucked up- if his entire life isn't just a chain of irrevocable fuck-ups dating back to his birth. And then Will nods, and gives him a watery smile, and Steve sighs in relief.

Billy- this *new* Billy that can feel empathy- is actually pretty good with kids. Steve can tell that some of their prodding and questions *annoy* him, but instead of threatening to tear their skin off and roll them in salt he simply calls them 'little assholes' and makes fun of Dustin's hair. Dustin looks to Steve for help after a few minutes of this, but Steve simply shrugs and gestures at their resident vampire friend. "He's still *Billy*, dude; idunno what you were expecting."

Billy *smirks* then, his trademark look from the homicidal monster days, and Steve tries not to let his breath catch when he sees it. He tries *very* hard, but he's surprised and alarmed to find that he *definitely* wants to see it again.

Dustin soon gets tired of Billy dancing around his scientific inquiries, and goes off in a huff to leaf through one of Hop's old tomes. The other kids soon follow suit, each finding something to occupy their

time, like they usually do when they're around- when Steve is babysitting. Which. It *is*, because he's *obviously* the responsible adult here. But he can't help but think, sometimes, that they don't *really* need him. They're smart kids, capable. *Sure*, he's the Slayer, and he kills vamps and saves the world and all that jazz, but. He's not certain, at the end of the day, if he could do *any* of that without them.

He turns to find Billy staring at him. They lock eyes for a moment, neither one of them moving.

“You wanna spar?”

Billy grins again, and Steve thinks he might just start grinning back.

Steve remembers a time when he thought his parents loved him. And they *do*, he thinks, in the only way they understand *how* to love, and that's... it's not *okay*, really, but it is what it is. They make sure he is clothed and fed. They make sure he has school materials, and his father harangues him about his grades when he remembers, even though Steve is at least 90% sure that his father doesn't even know what *classes* he's taking. His mother frets and wrings her hands when he comes home with bruises and cuts, when she *notices*- “*Steven, what am I going to do with you?*”- and even *he* doesn't know what to do with him, so he can't do much but shrug it off and smile. Apologize, placate, promise. “*Boys will be boys.*” They come to basketball games when they're not out of town.

Steve loves his parents, regardless of their preoccupation with work and each other, and their tactless bumbling at what they understand to be parenting. He's been angry at them, sure. He's felt betrayed and forgotten and hurt. But he's never *not* loved them. Never not *wanted* them to love him.

And Billy, he thinks, understands at least one of those feelings. Steve Harrington is dumb in a lot of ways; he couldn't tell you what year Edison invented the lightbulb, or explain the works of Shakespeare at length, but he knows *people*. He knows when Tommy lashes out that he's afraid of being left behind; he knows that when El is too quiet, when she sits in the dark with the radio spilling white noise, that she

is thinking about the place where Hop found her; and he *knows* that look in Billy's eyes. The one that questions, always, if he was *ever* good enough to be loved. How he balks at small kindnesses, puffs up and tries to make himself look bigger than he is. He has the decency not to ask him about it, just makes more of an effort to be there, in whatever way he can.

It's been a month, give or take a few days, and Billy's getting antsy. Steve is, too, if he's being honest, though he can't pinpoint why. The sun has just set, and Steve is readying himself for the night ahead. Billy picks up a stake, tosses it in the air and catches it again.

"You wanna come with?" Steve can't remember his brain telling his mouth to ask that, but it's out there now, so he's gonna roll with it.

Billy just looks at him for a second, before he smiles and nods. "Bout time, Harrington. Let's *fight* that evil!"

It's more *Billy* than Billy has been since his not-so-great return, so Steve thinks he'll roll with that, too.

Author's Note:

Special thanks to @youjustgotlawyered on tumblr for coming up with the title. <3

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